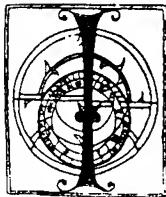


THE BESWICKE-ROYDS MASONIC MS. OF THE OLD CHARGES.

An exact Typographical Reproduction with a short Description.

BY BRO. RODK. H. BAXTER, P.Pr.G.SuP. Wks., E. Lanes.



T is interesting to record the discovery of still another copy of the "Old Charges," which brings the number of known written versions up to seventy-five, exclusive of the two "Crane" and the "Wren" MSS. which have disappeared in recent years.

The latest find has been named after the late Bro. C. R. N. Beswicke-Royds, P.G.D., for many years Deputy Provincial Grand Master of East Lancashire, amongst whose effects it was found after his decease. His Masonic legatee and executor, Bro. F. N. Molesworth, P.Prov.G.Reg^r, East Lancs., tells me that the MS. was presented to its late owner by a London friend over thirty years ago, but he, unfortunately, can throw no further light on its antecedents.

The document consists of four pieces of parchment, for the most part about six inches wide (the maximum width being six and one-sixteenth inches and the minimum five and three-quarter inches), stitched together to form a continuous strip six feet ten inches long over all, rolled up in the usual way. The scroll has originally been tied up with a piece of ribbon or tape, folded in the middle and sewn to the centre of the top of the MS., the tab of which still remains. The first sheet measures twenty-three and one-half inches, lapped *over* the second, the second twenty-four and one-half inches lapped *under* the third, the third twenty-three and one-half inches lapped *over* the fourth, and the fourth eleven and one-quarter inches; the difference between the sum of the separate lengths and the total being, of course, accounted for by the over-lapping of the sheets. A piece has been torn off the bottom right-hand corner of the roll but, fortunately, in such a way as not to interfere with the writing.

The parchment is much discoloured from age and frequent handling, but the writing is perfect and quite legible, with the exception of a few words obliterated by stains (reproduced in italics in the transcript) and a single word in line eleven (reproduced in italics in brackets) where a crack appears.

I was inclined to date the period of writing at the very beginning of the seventeenth century, as were also several antiquarian friends whom I consulted, but Bro. Thorp, of Leicester, who has kindly checked and corrected my transcript, says he would hesitate to date it earlier than the second half of that century.

The places where the scribe has started his labours afresh with a new or sharpened quill are easily discernible and occur at the beginnings of lines 51, 97, 156 and 291 and the fourth word in line 132.

That the clerk copied from a pre-existing document is perfectly evident from the many errors easily traced, some words being omitted and others duplicated, and so the value of this version is diminished in comparison with others. The spellings are peculiar and varied and the indiscriminate use of the letters u and v seems to follow no rule, unless we regard their frequent, though not universal contrary use, as having been the guide of the writer.

So far as classification is concerned, Bro. Thorp writes:—

Subjecting it to the tests established by the late Bro. W. J. Hughan and Bro. Dr. Begemann, I think it should be added to the SLOANE Family and to the *Sloane* Branch of the family, with the number E 21. In the most important points it is in general agreement with the Sloane MS. No. 3848, although there are some curious and uncommon discrepancies. Thus the wages paid by St. Alban are said to have been "every three weeks III^s VI^d their double wages," the first three words being most unusual. Again in the first charge reference is made to the "teaching of indiscreet men," in place of the usual word "discreet," an error also found in the Strachan and Scarborough MSS. In the sixteenth charge there is a curious error—it reads "Also that no mason make moulds sware etc.," instead of "square."

According to the late Bro. Gould's tests of evidential value from a legal standpoint it easily falls into Group III. of his classification.

THE TRANSCRIPT.

The might of the father of heauen wth
the wisdome of his glorious Sonne
through the goodnes of the holy Ghost that
bee three ps ons and one god bee wth vs bee
wth us att our begin'ng & giue vs grace
so to governe vs in or Livinge that wee may
come to his blisse that neuer shall haue
endinge

Good brethren & fellowes our purpose is to tell you
[10.] howe & in what manner this Craft of masonry
was begun & afterwards founded by worthy (*kings*)
& princes and many other wor^{ll} men & also to them
that bee here wee will declare the charge that doth
belonge to euery true Mason to keepe for in good
faith if you take heed therevnto jt is well worthy to
bee kept for a worthy Craft & Curious science for there
bee seaven liberall sciences of the wch this is one viz
the first is gramer that teacheth a man to *speake*
truly and write truly the seacond is rhetorick *which*
[20.] teacheth a man to speake faire and in subtil *termes*
the third is Logicke that teacheth to discerne truth
from falsehood, the fourth is Arithmetick that teach
eth to account and recount all manner of numbs the

fift is called Geometry and teacheth meat & measure
of the earth & oþer things of wch science is masonry
The sixt is musicke wch teacheth songe & voice of tonge
organs & harpe the VIIth is called Astronomy that
teacheth to knowe the Course of the sunne moone & oþer
ornamts of the heavens The wch seaven liberall

[30.] scienc's bee as it were all one science that is to say
Geometry for thus may a man proue that all the
scienc's in the wcrld bee found by Geometry for it teach
eth meat & measure ponderacon & weight of all maner
of kynd & earth and there is no man that worketh by
any craft but hee worketh by some measure and no man
buyes or sells but by measure & weight and all is Geome^{try}
And Craftsmen & merchants fynd no other of the VII
scienc's espetially plowe-men & tillers of graine both corne
seeds vynes plants & sellers of all other fruits, for Gram^r
[40.] neither Astronomy nor any of these can fynd a man
one measure or meat wthout Geometry wherefore I
thinke that science most worthy that fyndeth all others
Howe this worthy Science was first begun I shall tell
you. Before Noah's flood there was a man called
Lameth as it is written in the fourth Chapter of genesis
and this Lamech had twoe wyues the one was called
Ada, and the oþer sella and by the first wyfe Ada
he begott twoe sonnes the one was called Jabell & the
other Juball and by the oþer wyfe hee had one sonne
[50.] & a daughter And these 4 children found the begininge
of all crafts in the world: This Jaball was the elder sonne
and hee found the Craft of Geometry and hee separated
flocks of sheepe and lambs in the field and hee first
wrought an house of stone and Tree as it is noted in
the Chaptr abouesd. And his Brother Juball found
musick of songe harpe and organs and the third brothr
Tuballcain found smiths craft as of iron & steele & their
Sister found out weavinge And these children did know
that God would take vengeance for finne either by fire
[60.] or water wherefore they wrutt these scienc's wch were
found in twoe pillars of Stone that they might bee
found at after the flood. The one stone was called marble
that cannot burne wth fire The oþer was called Lateras
that cannot drowne wth watr. Our Intent is now to
tell you truly howe & in what manner these stones
were found whereon these Crafts were written The Greek
Hermenes that was sonne vnto Cus and Cus was sonne
vnto Sem who was sonne vnto Noah This same Herme
nes was afterwards called Hermes the father of wise men
[70.] and hee found out the twoe pillars of stone wherein the
scienc's were written and taught them forth And at the

makinge of the Tower Babilon there was the Craft of masonry then first found & made much of and the kinge of Babilon who was called Hembroth or Nembroth was a mason and loved well the Craft as it is said wth the mr of the stories And when the Citye of Ninivy & othr Citties of East Asia should bee made The kinge of Babilon sent thither sixty masons att the desire of the kinge of Ninivy his Cozen and they went forth and hee gaue them

[80.] a charge in this manner, That they should bee true & loue truly togeathr and that they should serue their lord truly for their paymt so that hee might haue wor'p for sendinge them and othr charges hee gaue them And this was the first tyme That any Mason had any Charge in this Craft. Moreouer when Abraham & sara his wyfe went into Egipt hee there taught the seaven scyencs vnto the Egiptians and hee had a worthy scholler called Euclid and hee learned right well and was master of all the VII sciences. And it befell in his dayes That the

[90.] lords and states of this Realme had so many sonnes that they had begotten some by their wyues and some by ladies of the realme for that land is an hott land & plenteous generacon and they had no Competent living for their children wherefore they made much sorrowe And the kinge of that land called a great Counsell & a pliamt to knowe howe they might fynd *there children*

meanes and they could fynd no good wayes Then hee caused a Cry to bee made throughout the Realme That if there were any man that could informe him that hee

[100.] should come vnto him and hee should bee well rewarded and hould himselfe well paid, And after this Crye was made, this worthy Clarke Euclid came and said to the kinge and all his great Lords If you will haue yor children gouerned & taught honestly as gentlemen should bee vnder Condison that you will grant them & mee a Comifcion that I may haue power to rule them honestly as those sciencs ought to bee ruled And the kinge wth his Counsell granted them & sealed that Comifcion And then the worthy docter tooke the Lords

[110.] sonnes and taught them the science of Geometry in practice to worke masonry and all manner of worthy workes that belonged to building of Castles & all maner of Courts Temples Churchs wth all other buildings & hee gaue them a charge in this manner first that they should bee true unto the kinge and vnto the lord they serued and that they should loue well togethr and bee true one to anothr and that they should call one & other fellowes & not servant or knaue nor othr foule

He made a goodly shew
Through the goodenes of his herte
He had excedent fayre in his shew
In the battaynynge eynyngh
In the grymnes of a Lylinge ther
Might be seid of hym that he was shewyngh
Lydyngh.

Good brythyn & flower my yonge wif
Kynge & kynges maner the fift
Was by grace & kynges fayre founched by a
& knyghte knyghtyng of yore
that he eke yore will declare the deyngh
By songe bryngyngh this Mason blyngyngh
faire if youtake my fayreng. He is well known
the fift by a worthy knyghte curiouly knyghte
to be a knyghte librall friende of the wryghte god & his
the fift is granyng that brestes a man to
truly and fayrely shew vrandes the knyghte
byste a man to speke fayre and to shew
the third is Logyng that brestes blyngyngh
founches falshood, the fourth is Clithuerlyng that
the wryghte and yowre astemminge of men
fift is called Gromtyn and brestes ingatyngh
of the eartes & other thynges of yore estemminge men
The syxte is misfike þor & brestes songe of þor
trades & þe seyng the syxte is called Olstronnyng that
brestes þe knowyngþe of þe sunne Moone &
þe duncte of þy wryghte. The wryghte brestes libral
friende he as it wryt all ore shewyngh that is to
Gromtyn blyngyngh þe wryghte.

ARS QUATUOR CORONATORUM.

workes that shal be done by building of Castles
of fortresse, Cities, & villes, & other buildings
by gentleyns & for gentry & in alme stadt shal
shoulde be done by the kyng and for the kyng
shoulde shal that they shoulde come to see to get
theire ent to be in offe and that they shal have
other fellowes & not for hant or knauis to be of
hantes and that they shoulde truly shew to the kyng
the lord thre knyght And that they shal have out of
wires of the Comynkyng to be maister of kynges
that neither for lese geat lirings ne for lese leys
off that eare lirr shew to be maister of kynges
wherby he shoulde be made knyght and they shal have
that they shoulde fall to. Itemm of the workes mch
the work wch shal be made wch shal be mch
shuldr that ale bunge to alle the ale kynges shal
make hym rovers by aysd fath that aysd fath
tyme & deynty frt in prefable tyme that
might lise by beneficiell and also that they shal
and shal have wch shal be mch
in aln Craft and mch work to com thare le
profitt and wch and brouche to com to com
shal be exdys and toud the Craft of kyng
was go stred & fees. And that aysd fath
it shal be mch of Geometrye and part is of
Masonrye. Longe after the chilren of Israel
mch by land of Bethisrael were id rather
it is called Jerusalem. Lande shal be
of Jerusalem called wch hym complyed
the same kyng David son of Malone for
you and gaud hym raynul And he gaud hym
at you thare for bethisrael. And kyng
Longe David son of Malone and wch son of
the same kyng

ARS QUATUOR CORONATORUM.

THE BESWICKE-ROYDS MS.

names and that they should truly serue for their paymt
[120.] the lord they serued And that they should ordeyne the
wisest of the Company to be maister of the lords worke &
that neither for loue great livinge nor riches to sett an
othr that hath litle Cuning to bee maister of the lords work
whereby hee should bee evill serued and they ashamed &
that the should call the Gouernor of the worke maister of
the worke whyles they worke wth him & many other
things that are to longe to tell & to all these Charges hee
made them sweare the great Oath that men vsed at that
tyme & ordeyned for them reaonable paymt that they
[130.] might liue by honestly and also that they should come
and afsemble wth others that hee might haue counsell
in their Craft and might worke best to serue their Lord for his
profitt and wrp and to correct themselues if they
haue trespassed and thus the Craft of Geometry
was gouerned there And that worthy mr gaue
it the name of Geometry; vndr wch is conteyned
Masonry. Longe after the Children of Israel came
into the land of Belhest wch nowe is called amongst
vs is called Jerusalem kinge Dauid began the temple
[140.] of Jerusalem called wth them Templa' Domini And
the same kinge Dauid loued Masons well & cherished
them and gaue them paymt And hee gaue them chargs
as you shall here afterwards. And after the decease of
Kinge David Solomon that was sonne vnto Dauid pformed
out the Temple his father had begun and hee sent after Masons
into dyvers lands and gathered them togeather so that hee had four
score thousand workers of stone and they were named Masons
and hee had three thousand of them wch were ordeyned maisters &
governors of that worke And there was a kinge of another Region
[150.] that men called Hyram and hee loved well kinge Solomon & gaue
him timber for his worke and hee had a Sonne that was named
Aynon and hee was mr of Geometry and hee was chiefe mr of
of all his masons and mr of all his Graveinge works & of all othr
masons that belonged to the Temple and this witnesseth the
Byble in libro Regn IIII^o capite 177. And this sonne
Solomon confirmed both charges & manners wch his father had
given to masons and thus was the worthy craft of masons
confirmed in the Cuntry of Jerusalem and in many othr
kingdomes glorious craftsmen walkinge abrode into
[160.] dyuers Cuntryes some because of learninge more craft
& other some to teach their craft. And so it befell yt
a curious mason named Naymus Graecus who
had beene at the makinge of Solomons Temple came
into france & there taught the Craft of masonry to
the men of France. And then there was one of the
royall blood of france called Charles Martell &

hee loued well this Craft and hee drewe to him this Naymus Graecus & learned of him the Craft & tooke upon him the Charges & manners & afterwards by the [170.] grace of God hee was elected kinge of france & when hee was in his state hee tocke to him many masons and made mafons there that were none before and sett them on worke & gaue them charges & manners & good paynt wch hee had learned of other masons & hee confirmed them a Charter from yeare to yeare to hould an afsembly & thus came the Craft of masonry into ffrance. England all this season stood void both of any Charge & Masonry vntill the tyme of St. Albcn and in his tyme the kinge of England yt [180.] was a pagan and hee walled the Towne wch is nowe called St Albons and so in Albons tyme a worthy knight was chiefe steward to the kinge & had goumt of the Realme & also of makinge the towne walls & hee loued masons well & cherished them & made their paynt right good standinge wages as the Realme did require for hee gaue them euery three weeks III^s VI^d their double wages whereas before that tyme through all the whole land a mason tooke but a peny a day till the tyme that St Albon mended it and gott them a charter of the kinge [190.] and his Counsell and gaue it the name of an Afsembly & was thereat himselfe & made masons & gaue them charges as you shall here hereafr. But after the death of St Albon there came great wars in England through dyuers nations so that the good Rule of masonry was de stroyed till the tyme of kinge Athelston who was a worthy kinge in England and hee brought the land into good rest & peace againe & hee builded many great works of Castles Abbies & many other Buildings

and many othr Buildings and hee loued masons very well and he had a sonne that was named Hedwine [200.] and hee loued masons much more than his father for hee was full of the practice of Geometry wherefore hee drewe himselfe to comune wth masons & to learne of them the Craft & afterwards for loue hee had to masons & the craft hee was made mason himselfe & hee gott of his father the kinge a Charter & a Comifion to hould euer yeare an Afsembly where they would within the realme & to correct wthin themselues by statute Trespasses if they were done wthin the Craft. And hee held himselfe an afsembly at york & there hee made masons & gaue them charges and taught them the manners of masons and comannnded that Rule to bee houlden euer after and to him he betooke the Charter & Comifion to keepe & ordeyned

That it should bee ruled from kinge to kinge. when the Afsembly was gathered togethr hee caufsed a Cry to bee made that all masons both ould & yonge That had any writings or vnderstanding of the Charges that were made before either in this land or any othr that they should shewe them forth and there was some in french some

[220.] in Greeke & some in Englishe and some in othr langages and the Intent thereof was found, and thereof hee com mannded a booke to bee made, how the Craft was first found & made, and Comannded that it should bee read & tould when any mafon should bee made & to give them the charge and from tyme till this masonry hath beene kept in that forme and order as well as men might Gouerne the same, And furthermore at dyvers asemblies hath beene putt to and added certaine charges more by the best aduice of maisters & fellowes

[230.] here followeth the worthy & godly oath of masons (vizt)

Euery man that is a mason take heed right well of this charge if you fynd yo^r selfe guilty of any of these that you may amend you againe espetially yo^u that are to bee charged take good heed that you may keepe this Charge for it is a great prill for a man to forsweare himselfe vpon a Booke.

1 The first charge is that you shall bee true man to God and holy church, and that you vse no heresie

[240.] or error by your vnderstandinge or by teachinge of indiscreet men.

2 Also you shall bee true liegemen to the kinge wthout treason or fallshood and that you knowe no treason but that you amend it if you may or ells warne the kinge or his Counsell thereof.

3 Also you shall be true one to another, that is to say to euery mr & fellowe of the Craft of masonry that bee mafons allowed & that you doe to them as you would they should doe to you.

[250.] 4 And also that euer mason keepe Counsell of lodge and chamber truly & all othr Counsell that ought to bee kept by the way of masonry.

5 Also that no mason bee thiefe in Company so farr forth as yo^w shall knowe.

6 And also that you shall bee true vnto the lord & mr that you serue & truly to see for his profitt & advantage

7 Also that you doe no villany in that house whereby the Craft may be slandered.

[260.] These bee the Charges in Gen'all wch euery mason should hould both maisters & fellowes Now followe other Charges in pticuler for maisters & fellowes.

1 first that no mr take vpon him any lords worke nor other worke butt that hee knowe himselfe able of Cuming to pforme the same so that the Craft haue no disworship but that the lord may bee serued truly.

2 Also that no mr take any worke but that hee take it reasonably so that the lord may be truly served wth his owne goods & the mr liue honestly & truly pay his fellowes their pay as the manner of the Craft doth require.

3 Also that no mr nor fellowe supplant other of their worke (that is to say) if they haue taken a worke or stand mr of a lord's worke you shall not putt him out vnles hee bee unable of Cuming to end the worke

4 Also that no mr or fellowe take any prentice to bee allowed his aprentice but for seaven years and that the apprentice bee able of birth & limms as hee ought to bee.

[280.] 5 Also that no mr nor fellowe take allowance to bee made mason wthout the aſent of his fellowes at the leaſt fyve or ſix.

6 And alſo that hee that is to bee made masons bee free borne of good kinred & no bondman & that hee haue his right lims as a man ought to haue.

7 Also that no mr putt a lords worke to taske that was vſed to goe to journey.

8 Also that euery mason giue pay to his fellowes *but* as hee may deserue ſo that hee bee not deſeaued by false workmen.

9 Alſo that no fellowe ſlandr anothr falsly behind his backe to make him loſe his good name or his worldly goods.

10 Alſo that no fellowe wthin the lodg or wthout answer another vngodly wthout reasonable cause.

11 Alſo that euery mason preferr his elder & putt him to worship.

12 Alſo that no mason ſhall play at cards hazards or any oþer vñlaw¹¹ game wherby they may bee ſlandered.

[300.] 13 Also that no mason committ Ribaldry or leachery to make the Craft slandered & that no fellowe goe into the towne where there is a lodge of masons wthout a fellowe to bear him witnes that hee was in honest Company.

14 Also that euer mr & fellowe come to the Afsembly if hee bee wthin fifty myles & hee haue warninge & to stnd to the award of maisters and fellowes.

15 Also that euery mr & fellowe if hee haue trespassed shall stand to the award of mrs & fellowes to make them accord & if they cannot to goe to the Comon lawe.

[310.]

16 Also that no mason make moulds sware or rule to any rough layers.

17 Also that no mason sett layers wthin a lodge or wthout to haue mould stones wth moulde of his owne makinge.

18 Also that euery mason shall receave and cherish strang masons when they come ouer the Cuntry & sett them on worke as the manner is (that is to say) if they haue mould stones in place hee shall sett him a fortnight on worke at the least & giue him his hyre & if there bee no stones for him theu to refresh him wth some money to bringe him to the next lodge, and also eu'y euery mason shall serue truly the workes and truly make an end of the worke bee it taske or Journey if hee haue his pay as he ought to haue.

[320.]

These charges that are here rehearsed and all other that belouge to masonry you shall truly keepe to the vttermost of yo^r knowledge

[329.] So helpe you God and by the Contents of this Book
